

Clark County, Washington *Endangered Species Act Information*

ESA in Clark County: What you should know



First of all, what is the ESA?

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) is a federal law designed to protect and recover fish, wildlife, and plants that are threatened with or are in danger of becoming extinct. It requires federal and state agencies to work in coordination with local jurisdictions to recover listed species. Under the ESA in Clark County, several species have already been listed as threatened, including summer and winter steelhead, chum and Chinook salmon, and bull trout.

What is the 4(d) rule and how does it affect me?

The 4(d) rule is a section of the ESA that requires National Marine Fisheries Services (NMFS) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to issue regulations to protect species listed as threatened or endangered by prohibiting the "take" (i.e., kill or harm) of these species without specific authorization. The 4(d) rule

can affect any person whose actions "take" listed species or the habitat they require. This would include dumping toxic chemicals into waters or applying pesticides and herbicides in a manner that adversely affects the biological requirements of the species.

So, why are wild salmon declining?

The effects of human activity on fish populations have been decades in the making and will take decades to remedy. The four main areas of human activity that threaten salmon are known as the four H's:

- **HARVEST:** Commercial and sport fishing reduce fish population.
- **HATCHERIES:** Artificial production facilities produce domesticated fish that threaten the ability of wild fish to survive when they interbreed with the hatchery fish.
- **HYDROPOWER:** Dams block

salmon migration up and down rivers and flood fish habitat.

- **HABITAT:** Streams, rivers, marine waters, and surrounding floodplains are being steadily degraded by human activities that add contaminants to the water, decrease water flow, and create barriers to fish passage.

What is Clark County doing to save salmon?

In response to the listings of threatened fish, Clark County has implemented an Endangered Species Program to address ESA requirements and to inform the public about the importance of these issues. The Endangered Species Program is working cooperatively with numerous groups, ranging from federal, state, and local governments to citizen groups, Native American groups, the business community, environmentalists, and other organizations.

ESA requirements notwithstanding, why should I care about saving these fish?

What do you want Clark County to look like 50 years from now? What legacy do we want to leave our children and grandchildren? Why can't we just let the fish go extinct? Will saving the salmon really help us?

This issue should be a concern to everyone because salmon, like the canary in the coal mine, are good indicators of our own wellbeing. The clean water and healthy environment that salmon need to survive are the same things we need for our own long-term survival. Saving salmon can also be an opportunity to improve the quality of life in our county.

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Salmon are important cultural icons in the Northwest. Their loss would be great to our communities. The Northwest without wild salmon would be like Australia without kangaroos or Alaska without moose.

If we don't care enough about saving salmon, what else are we willing to let go?

Although there is a cost to saving salmon and other wild species, there is also long-term economic and environmental value to safeguarding our ecosystems. Many businesses and individuals move to Clark County because of everything our environment offers. As a society, we have a choice as to whether or not future generations will enjoy clean waterways teeming with salmon. The county is working with community groups, individuals, and other jurisdictions on salmon recovery efforts balanced within the framework of social and economic reality. Some priorities include addressing water quality issues, ensuring adequate riparian buffers, and working with landowners and businesses on implementing best management practices.

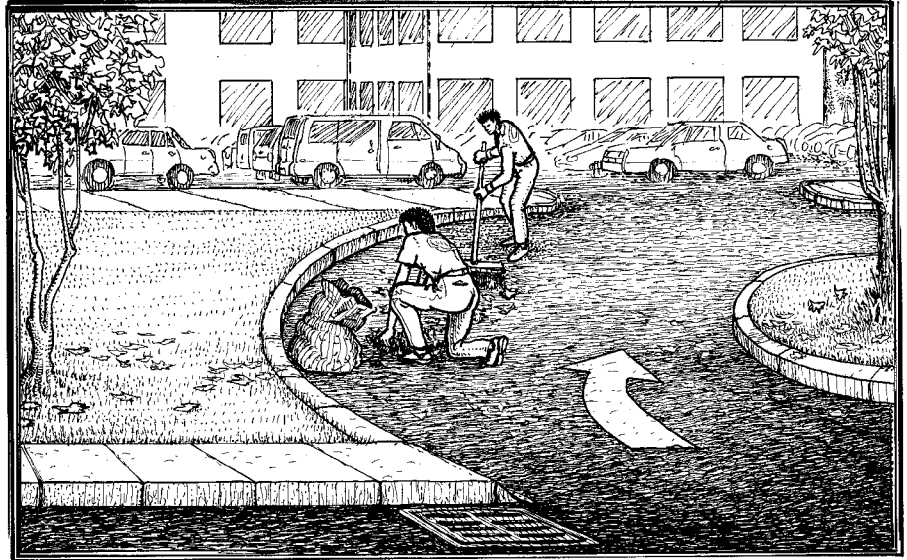
For more information on salmon recovery, contact the Clark County Endangered Species Program at (360) 397-2022 or visit www.saveoursalmon.com.

What can I do to help?

Some people believe that if they don't live along a stream or river then what they do won't have an effect on salmon. **Not true!** The fact is the water quality of a stream or river is often influenced by activities that take place miles away.

Salmon rely on us!

- Never dump anything down a storm drain.
- Wash your car on grass where soapy water is absorbed or take it to an automatic car wash.



- Sweep sidewalks and driveways instead of hosing them with water.
- Don't use hazardous household products like chlorine bleach.
- Recycle motor oil, antifreeze, and other hazardous waste at collection centers.
- For paths and driveways, use natural ground cover and porous materials such as gravel or bark instead of asphalt and concrete.
- Store chemicals where there's no chance for them to pollute groundwater.
- Cover garbage cans and dumpsters to keep water from leaking contaminants from the trash.

If you garden:

- Compost yard debris and kitchen scraps.
- Plant native plants (they are resistant to pests and acclimated to local conditions).
- Conserve water—don't use sprinklers mid-day when the weather is warmest.
- Avoid use of pesticides and fertilizers and remove weeds by hand. (If you do use pesticides, use them correctly.)

If you own land with a river or stream running through it:

- Prevent erosion from entering streams.
- Maintain sufficient riparian areas (native plant growth along stream banks).
- Minimize use of pesticides and fertilizers and make sure they won't wash off into streams.
- Fence livestock away from stream banks.
- Avoid clear-cutting on steep slopes.



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